

## Heinrich Pfeiffer

### **Some Examples of Franciscan Art and Architecture in Mexico**

Artistic activity was closely connected with that of evangelization in the Franciscan missions in Nova Hispania, the current Mexican Republic, from its beginnings in the second decade of the sixteenth century. The article is divided into two parts: the first part discusses an altar panel representing the life of St Francis, painted around 1560, and the second outlines the construction of convents and churches in the Sierra Gorda in the mission undertaken by the famous Franciscan Junipero Serra in the second half of the eighteenth century. If in the first section is presented the hypothesis, almost a thesis, with many convincing arguments that the author of the panel, now in the parish church of Tecali in the province of Puebla, is Pedro de Ghent, the second section describes the organization and structure of a Franciscan monastery with its church in general. The altarpiece of Tecali displays stylistic similarities with the School of Lucas Cranach the Elder. Once again we are faced with a mystery that can be given only a hypothetical solution, namely, that Pedro de Gante knew the work of the Wittenberg painter. In any case, the panel with the life of St Francis is not only one of the most important paintings of the entire sixteenth century in Mexico, but also contains some new iconography, never dealt within Franciscan art in Europe.